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AUTHOR	Sonnenfeld, David
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ABSTRACT

This report presents the findings of a student transfer study that attempted to determine the socioeconomic characteristics of parents requesting transfers, the reasons for these requests, the frequency of transfers to different schools, parents' sources of information about transfer possibilities, parents' satisfaction with their children's school situations, and the change in the homogeneity of students as a result of transfers. Findings indicate that (1) the transfer policy has been utilized primarily by high socioeconomic status parents; (2) parents most often requested student transfers at the time of relocation to allow their children to remain in the schools they had previously attended, to place their children in particular schools' programs, or to have their children attending schools whose locations were preferable; (3) school officials, guidance counselors, friends, and central office personnel were most frequently the sources of information about the transfers; (4) parents were largely satisfied with their children's present school situations; and (5) data was insufficient to determine whether students in the district had become more or less homogeneously grouped as a result of the transfers. (Author/DN)

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Family Choice in Schooling: A Case Study

Intradistrict Student Transfers, Eugene, Oregon

Working Paper 3
October, 1972

David Sonnenfeld
Independent Scholar
University of Oregon

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Intradistrict Student Transfers
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PREFACE

It is frustrating to attempt to integrate and synthesize large amounts of data into a comprehensible, meaningful form; also, it is painful: much of the data used here was collected via a questionnaire from parents; I have never been able to figure out how to use all of the information, and feelings, which those parents kindly and trustingly conveyed to me. Having completed the writing of this paper, I now go back to the questionnaires and wince at the sight of each tidbit of data, each expression of satisfaction or dismay that I have not somehow been able to synthesize into the text.

This research is, at the same time, both exploratory and pragmatic. It is exploratory in that it is the first part of a longer range research project dealing with the variables (and contingencies) involved in increasing family choice in schooling. And it is pragmatic because it is intended to be of immediate usefulness to parents, students, and, particularly, educators in Eugene school district 4J, where it was conducted.

Two working papers have preceded this one. Information in the first, "Intradistrict Student Transfers in Eugene, Oregon," has been incorporated into this working paper; the second, "A Comparative Analysis of Student Transfer Policies for Major Metropolitan School Districts in Oregon," is available from me at the address below. A monograph will soon be written, relating our findings to existing bodies of theory relevant to family choice in schooling, and suggesting questions for further research.

Most important to note in this working paper, I think, is the finding that the District 4J transfer policy may discriminate against the participation of families of low socioeconomic status. Also important are the large numbers of requests to some schools and away from others--perhaps, in studying the number of transfer requests in this or any given year, district administrators could have a useful gauge for determining demand for particular programs, and also for spotting schools with which parents are becoming dissatisfied.

Those readers concerned with the policy implications of this research might keep a number of questions in mind: Who is benefiting from District 4J's transfer policy? Is this as we would like it? For what reasons are people requesting transfers? Are these reasons valid? Should any reason be valid? Who knows that they can get a transfer? If we wanted more people to know about transfers, how would we start? Do we want more people to know about transfers? Etc.

This study was supported in part by a grant from the Office of Scientific and Scholarly Research, of the Graduate School at the University of Oregon. The opinions expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of either the Office of Scientific and Scholarly Research, or of the University of Oregon. No official endorsement by either organization should be inferred.

I would like to thank Mr. Fred Wilhelm, of the Graduate School, for his assistance in the initial quest for funds, as well as in later procedural and business matters; Ms. LaNola Bacon, of the Graduate School for her patient assistance in business matters; Professors John Orbell and Jan Newton for their helpfulness and encouragement;

Hans Jansen and Hollis McMilan for their aid in the preliminary and research phases of the study; and Professors Phil Runkel, John Wish, Greg Maltby, and Dick Schmuck for their professional and editorial assistance in drafting this paper.

Thanks also to Ms. Diane Nechak of the Lane Council of Governments, and Ms. Karen Seidel, of the Bureau of Governmental Research at the University of Oregon, for helping me struggle through that mess which is called census data.

Especially, I would like to acknowledge the cooperation we received from various persons at District 4J: Dr. Millard Pond, Superintendent; Mr. Herman Lawson, Administrative Assistant; Dr. Charles Stephens, Coordinator of Research; and Ms. Jo Dunsmore, Secretary, Office of Research.

And to those parents who took the time and effort to fill out and return our questionnaire, also, I would like to express my appreciation.

Anyone desiring further information about this study may write to me, c/o Program 03, Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403.

David Sonnenfeld

FAMILY CHOICE IN SCHOOLING, A CASE STUDY:

Intradistrict Student Transfers

Eugene, Oregon

Abstract

Parents in Eugene, Oregon school district 4J have a great deal of flexibility in choosing schools for their children. If they so desire, they may request for their children transfers to schools outside of their duly assigned school attendance areas. Almost 90% of the 299 such requests made for the 1971-72 school year were granted by the district.

We attempted to study (a) the socioeconomic characteristics of those parents who had requested student transfers for the 1971-72 school year; (b) the reasons for which the transfer requests had been made; (c) whether or not particular schools had received unusually many (or few) requests; (d) the source of the parents' information about the possibility of student transfers; (e) the satisfaction of parents with their children's present school situations; and (f) the degree to which students in the school district became more or less homogeneously grouped (in terms of their socioeconomic characteristics) as a result of the transfers.

Findings indicate that (a) the transfer policy had apparently been utilized primarily by persons of high socioeconomic status; (b) parents most often had requested student transfers to allow their children to remain in schools they had previously attended, to place their children in particular schools' programs, or to have their children attending schools whose locations were preferable; (c) school officials, guidance counselors, friends, and central office personnel had been most frequently the sources of information about the transfers; and (d) parents were largely satisfied with their children's present school situations. Available data were insufficient to determine whether students in the district had become more or less homogeneously grouped as a result of the transfers. In addition, data point to some possible inconsistencies in the administration of the transfer policy.

1: Purpose of Study

There has been much ado about family choice in schooling: critics of schooling, arguing for cultural pluralism and the rights of families, have suggested a number of ways for enlarging the family's role as a unit of decision-making in schooling;[1] their critics, in turn, fearing deepened socio-economic and cultural polarization, and a decrease in the quality of public schooling, have argued against such proposals.[2] Substantive data concerning the social effects of increasing family choice in schooling has been scarce.[3]

As stands to reason, parents in some school districts have greater amounts of choice in regards to schooling than do parents in other school districts. With the hope of adding to the (practically non-existent) body of knowledge dealing with the effects of various degrees of family choice in schooling, we have studied a group of parents who <u>have</u> exercised choice in the selection of schools for their children.

Parents in Eugene, Oregon school district 4J, may, if they desire, request that their children be transferred to schools other than the ones to which they have been duly assigned. Such requests are made to the Superintendent's office and are usually decided upon by an Administrative Assistant, who considers each request on an individual basis. No transportation is provided if the request is accepted. Little effort has been made by the district to publicize the policy.[4] Of 299 requests for student transfers received by the district for the 1971-72 school year, almost 90% were granted.

Specifically, the purpose of our study was to determine (a) who, in relation to the total population of the school district, had attempted

to make use of student transfers for the 1971-72 school year; (b) the reasons for which parents had been willing to sacrifice the cost of pursuing the transfer request and the cost of their children changing schools; (c) why certain schools, if any, had been requested more frequently than others; (d) from whom parents had obtained information about the possibility of student transfers; (e) the degree of parents' satisfaction with their childrens' present school situations; and (f) the degree to which students in the district had become more or less homogeneously grouped (in terms of their socioeconomic characteristics) as a result of the student transfers.

We hypothesized that (a) student transfers had been utilized predominantly by families of high socioeconomic status; (b) parents had requested transfers largely to enable their children to go to curricularly or environmentally differentiated schools; (c) some schools had been requested more frequently than others, due to their differentiation from other schools; (d) parents had obtained information about the possibility of transfers from a number of sources, but particularly from their friends and colleagues; (e) that many parents would be quite satisfied with their children's present school situations, while a substantial number would be still dissatisfied; and that (f) students in the district had become substantially more homogeneously grouped (in terms of their socioeconomic characteristics) as a result of student transfers.

2: Procedures

Data were first obtained from the original written request made to District 4J by the parents; these requests were on file at the district's central offices. As school district files are confidential, all data were collected by District 4J personnel and presented to us in coded form. Data from District 4J files, for each transfer request[5] for the 1971-72 school year, included (a) the reasons stated for the request, (b) the school the transfer was requested to, and (c) the status of the request. We also received data concerning the school requested and the school of origination for each student involved in a transfer request.

Additional data were obtained via mailed questionnaires (see Appendix A). To protect the privacy of the parents involved, the district addressed and mailed all questionnaires.[6] Questionnaires were mailed to 277 families (seven families had made more than one request; 15 requests had been initiated not by families, but by correctional officials). No attempt was made to follow up the original mailing, due to the excessive amounts of district time that would have been involved in addressing and mailing. One hundred seventeen, or 42%, of the questionnaires were completed and returned over a four-week period.

Where possible, data from district 4J files were compared to data obtained via the questionnaire as a check of the latter data's validity.

3: Findings

Who Requested Transfers?

Questionnaire data indicates that those parents who had requested student transfers for the 1971-72 school year were likely of higher relative socioeconomic status than were Eugene families as a whole. Respondents had larger annual incomes than Eugene families as a whole; they had also had more schooling, and were more predominantly managerial-professional and white-collar workers than various comparative populations in Eugene (see Tables 1-3).

In regard to length of residency, 36% of the families in the sample had lived in their present junior high school district for less than two years, 26% for two to five years, and 38% for more than five years. This is roughly comparable to Census data for Eugene which show that 39% of all families and unrelated individuals had lived in their present home for less than two years, 29% for two to five years, and 32% for more than five years; more finite Census data concerning length of residence are not available.

Forty-nine per cent of the sample population intended to continue living in their present junior high school district for less than two years, 22% for two to five years, and 49% for more than five years.

Why Did Parents Request Transfers?

Data concerning the reasons for which parents had requested student transfers were obtained both from district files and from questionnaire data. Data obtained from the questionnaire were of two types: we first asked respondents to state the reasons for their

TABLE 1a

Schooling Completed by Male Parents in Sample and by Males 25 Years of Age and Older, of Eugene[7]

	Sample (n = 103)		Census (n = 18,178)
Advanced Degree	28.2%	5+ Years College	21.2%
Bachelor's Degree	22.3	4 Years College	10.8
2 Years College	32.3	1-3 Years College	14.7
High School	22.3	High School	25.1
Lt High School	3.9	Lt High School	28.2

TABLE 1b

Schooling Completed by Female Parents in Sample and by Females, 25 Years of Age and Older, of Eugene

	Sample (n = 108)		Census (n = 20, 157)
Advanced Degree	11.1%	5+ Years College	9.1%
Bachelor Degree	20.4	4 Years College	10.6
2 Years College	35.2	1-3 Years College	17.7
High School	30.6	High School	35.5
Lt High School	2.8	Lt High School	27.4

TABLE 2

Combined Annual Family Income for Respondents

and for Families in Eugene

	Sample (n = 111)	Census (n = 17,984)
$25,000 or more	9.0%	5.3%
15,000 - 24,999	25.2	17.8
12,000 - 14,999	24.3	14.5
10,000 - 11,999	18.0	12.2
8,000 - 9,999	7.2	13.0
6,000 - 7,999	5.4	12.6
4,000 - 5,999	4.5	10.6
Less than 4,000	6.3	13.8

TABLE 3a

Occupation of Male Parents in Sample and of Males

16 Years of Age and Older, of Eugene

	Sample[a] (n = 97)	Census (n = 27,672)
Managerial-Professional[b]	40.5%	22.9%
White-Collar	23.4	11.1
Blue-Collar	29.5	29.4
Unemployed	1.6	4.6
Student	6.5	19.9
Other[c]		12.0

[a]Does not include male parents deceased (3) or not living with family (12). [b]For a definition of this and other occupational classifications, see Appendix B. [c]"Other" includes serving in military, inmate of correctional institute.

TABLE 3b

Occupation of Female Parents in Sample and of Females, 16 Years of Age and Older, of Eugene

	Sample (n = 109)[a]	Census (n = 29,342)
Managerial-Professional	18.3%	11.2%
White-Collar	35.8	19.0
Blue-Collar	2.8	9.9
Unemployed[b]		3.1
Housewife	39.4	41.9
Student	3.7	14.9

[a]Does not include female parents deceased (1).

[b]Unemployed is defined here as "in labor force, but unemployed." This distinction is not made in the questionnaire data.

requests[8] which they had stated to the district; then, in order to check the validity of data in district files, we asked respondents to state any reasons they had had for the request, but had not stated to the district.

Data obtained from the first question on the questionnaire (reasons mentioned) follow extremely close to the data from district files, with one exception: the number of negative reasons mentioned on the questionnaire were considerably higher than the number mentioned in district files, at least as the files were coded.[9] Data obtained from the second question (reasons not mentioned), however, were quite different from the file data.

According to District 4J files, the greatest number of transfers were requested to enable a student either to continue in a school he or she had moved away from, or in the case of boundary confusions, to attend junior or senior high school with his or her friends from elementary or junior high school; these might be considered reasons of stability--in cases where the family has moved, they might also be seen as expressions of satisfaction with the previously attended schools. The second most frequent type of reason indicated in district records was to enable a student to take advantage of particular schools' programs and/or general environments.[10] At an elementary level, the locations of requested and original schools were frequently at the center of parents' requests for transfers: they were concerned about the general safety of routes to the schools, the amounts of traffic along the routes, and the proximity of the schools to after-school child care. (See Table 4.)

As we have mentioned, data obtained from the first question on the questionnaire follow closely to that obtained from district files. Data from the second question are revealing: of the reasons parents indicated that they had not mentioned to the district, 43% concerned problems in, or dissatisfaction with original schools. Another 20% had not mentioned that they desired to send their children to particular schools because of the schools' programs and/or general environments. It would seem that parents had understated to the district desires both to get away from perceived inadequacies at particular schools and to go to particular schools because of their programs and/or general environments. (See Table 5.)

TABLE 4

Reasons Stated to District for Transfer Requests
(from Questionnaire and File Data)

	Elem. F[a]	Elem. S[b]	Jr. High F	Jr. High S	Sr. High F	Sr. High S	Total F	Total S
Stability[c]	51 (43%)	29 (38%)	32 (42%)	13 (35%)	51 (50%)	29 (67%)	134 (45%)	74 (45%)
Location[d]	25 (21%)	19 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (8%)	21 (13%)
Program/ Environment[e]	16 (13%)	9 (12%)	20 (26%)	8 (21%)	14 (14%)	8 (19%)	50 (17%)	25 (15%)
Problems in & with Original School[f]	6 (5%)	15 (20%)	7 (9%)	12 (32%)	5 (5%)	3 (7%)	18 (6%)	31 (19%)
Special Educational Facilities[g]	2 (2%)	3 (4%)	6 (8%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (6%)	5 (3%)
Other[h]	3 (2%)	1 (1%)	4 (5%)	2 (5%)	2 (2%)	3 (7%)	9 (4%)	7 (4%)
No Records	16 (14%)	0 (0%)	8 (11%)	0 (0%)	30 (29%)	0 (0%)	54 (17%)	0 (0%)
Total	119	76	77	37	102	43	298	163[i]

[a] Data from District 4J files; figures indicate the primary reason for each transfer request: i.e., even if there were several reasons, only the primary reason was recorded.

[b] Data from questionnaire sample; figures include all reasons stated to the district for the most recent child for whom a request was made (104 people gave one reason, 47 people gave two reasons, 12 people gave three reasons): i.e., if several reasons were given, each was recorded.

[c] Includes "family moved; child wanted to continue with friends," "child wanted to be in school with friends from previous school," etc. (Data classifications are the same for both questionnaire and file data for this and all other classes.)

[d] Location of requested school: includes "safer route," "less traffic," "closer to babysitter," "closer," etc.

[e] Parents desired the program and/or general environment of the requested school.

[f] Various problems at original school; includes "poor program," "negative environment," "child needs change in peer group," etc.

[g] Child has a diagnosed learning problem and needs special facilities.

[h] Includes general reasons such as "general welfare," etc.

[i] School level could not be determined for seven of the reasons.

TABLE 5

Reasons Not Mentioned to District for Transfer Requests

(from Questionnaire Data)[a]

	Elementary	Jr. High	Sr. High	Total
Stability	4 (10%)	1 (7%)	10 (30%)	15 (17%)
Location	7 (18%)	0 (0%)	2 (6%)	9 (10%)
Program/ Environment	6 (15%)	3 (20%)	7 (21%)	18 (20%)
Problems in and with Original School	18 (46%)	9 (60%)	11 (33%)	39 (43%)
Special Educational Facilities	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
Other	3 (3%)	2 (13%)	3 (11%)	8 (9%)
Total	39	15	33	90[b]

[a]Figures include all reasons for request not mentioned to school district (57 people gave one additional reason, 22 gave two additional reasons, 10 gave three additional reasons, and one gave four additional reasons).

[b]School level could not be determined for three of the additional reasons.

Why Certain Schools?

Some schools attracted transfer requests to them; other schools had transfers requested away from them (see Table 6). And some schools were involved in more transfer requests than other schools (see Table 6). What caused these patterns to emerge?

At the senior high school level, two schools (Churchill and Sheldon High Schools) attracted large numbers of transfer requests to them; and two schools (North Eugene and South Eugene High Schools) had large numbers of transfer requests away from them (see Table 6).

School boundaries were apparently a major cause for the large number of transfer requests between Churchill and South Eugene: one strip of students who attended a particular junior high school are supposed to go to South Eugene, while most of their classmates go to Churchill. According to District 4J data, up to 52% of the 61 requests for transfers to Churchill may have been involved in this situation.

Churchill's program and general environment, particularly in contrast to that of South Eugene also seems to be involved: 16% of the requests for transfers to Churchill were due largely to Churchill's program; and, while both district and questionnaire data show that only one request due to problems in the previous school was stated to the district, questionnaire data show that eight of the 22 reasons for transfer requests to Churchill that were not mentioned to the district involved dissatisfaction with the original schools.[11] Dissatisfaction was largely with previous schools' general environments. Most requests to Churchill were from South Eugene (see Figure 1).

TABLE 6

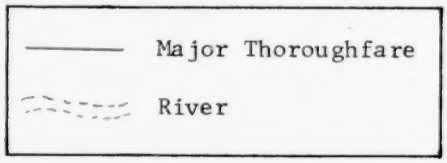
Number of Child en for Whom Transfer Requests Were Made to and from Various Schools (from District 4J Data)

		To	From	Total Transfers Involved in	Net Gain
High Schools:	Churchill	64	9	73	55
	Sheldon	22	8	30	14
	North Eugene	6	29	35	-23
	South Eugene	15	61	73	-46
Jr. High:	Roosevelt	44	8	52	36
	Kennedy	6	4	10	2
	Monroe	9	8	17	1
	Kelly	4	4	8	0
	Madison	2	7	9	- 5
	Cal Young	2	7	9	- 5
	Spencer Butte	6	14	20	- 8
	Jefferson	9	33	42	-24
Elementary:	Adams	18	3	21	15
	Edgewood	13	2	15	11
	Spring Creek	9	2	11	7
	Willard	15	8	23	7
	Edison	9	4	13	5
	Howard	8	3	11	5
	Meadow Lark	7	2	9	5
	Silver Lea	5	1	6	4
	Bailey Hill	3	0	3	3
	Condon	8	5	13	3
	Crest Drive	5	3	8	2
	Harris	3	2	5	1
	Washington	1	0	1	1
	Willakenzie	3	2	5	1
	Coburg	0	0	0	0
	Malagdry	4	4	8	0
	River Road	3	3	6	0
	Gilham	1	3	4	- 2
	Westmoreland	5	7	12	- 2
	Whiteaker	0	2	2	- 2
	McCornack	0	3	3	- 3
	Twin Oaks	0	3	3	- 3
	Laurel Hill	1	5	6	- 4
	Willagillespie	5	9	14	- 4
	Awbry Park	2	7	9	- 5
	Lincoln	3	8	11	- 5
	Parker	1	6	7	- 5
	Patterson	6	12	18	- 6
	Fox Hollow	2	10	12	- 8
	Dunn	3	12	15	- 9
	Santa Clara	0	10	10	-10
Totals		332	333[a]		

[a]District 4J data do not add up equally.

KEY TO FIGURES 1-3

No.	School
1	Churchill High
2	North Eugene
3	Sheldon
4	South Eugene
5	Jefferson Junior High
6	Kelly
7	Kennedy
8	Madison
9	Monroe
10	Roosevelt
11	Spencer Butte
12	Cal Young
13	Adams Elementary
14	Awbrey Park
15	Bailey Hill
16	Coburg
17	Condon
18	Crest Drive
19	Dunn
20	Edgewood
21	Edison
22	Fox Hollow
23	Gilham
25	Harris
26	Howard
27	Laurel Hill
28	Lincoln
29	Magladry
30	McCornack
31	Meadow Lark
32	Parker
33	Patterson
34	River Road
35	Santa Clara
36	Silver Lea
37	Spring Creek
38	Twin Oaks
39	Washington
40	Westmoreland
41	Whiteaker
42	Willagillespie
43	Willakenzie
44	Willard



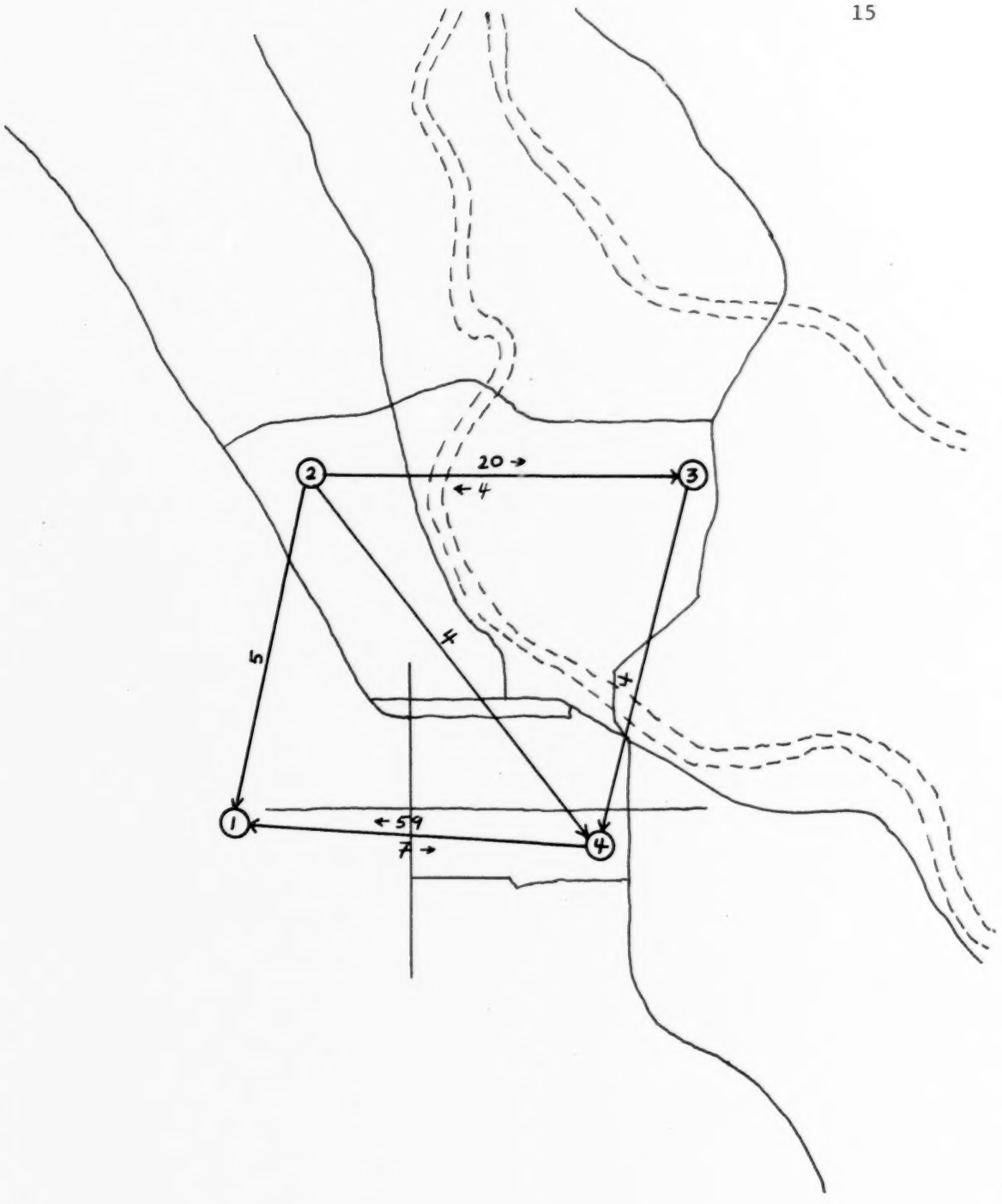


Figure 1

Geographic representation of number of high school students involved in transfer requests, by schools (frequencies greater than one)--from District 4J data (n = 82)

School boundaries may also have been a major factor in the large number of transfer requests from North Eugene to Sheldon: one group of students who attend a particular junior high school are supposed to go to North Eugene, while most of their classmates go to Sheldon. Up to 43% of the 21 requests for transfers to Sheldon may have been involved.

It has also been suggested that the presence of an open campus at Sheldon and a closed campus at North Eugene may have been involved.[12]

It should be noted that geography probably plays an important role in requests for student transfers: in Figure 1, one can notice that few transfers have been requested between Churchill and South Eugene on one hand, and North Eugene and Sheldon on the other. As transportation is <u>not</u> provided with transfers, accessibility becomes important. Both North Eugene and Sheldon are separated from South Eugene and Churchill by very long and rather indirect routes.

At the junior high school level, one school (Roosevelt Junior High School) attracted large numbers of transfer requests to it; and two schools (Jefferson and Spencer Butte Junior High Schools) had large numbers of transfer requests away from them (see Table 6).

Roosevelt is one of the most unique schools in District 4J: the curriculum is periodically revised, many classes are offered on a three-six week basis, many classes have been offered at student request, no classes are required for completion and written evaluations have taken the place of grades. Modeled after William Glasser's "school without failure," Roosevelt is probably the most well known of the district's "experimental" schools; the local news media have probably

carried more (non-sports) news about Roosevelt than any other single school in the district.

It is apparently Roosevelt's uniqueness (and perhaps also its notoriety) which attracts many of the transfer requests: the largest number of requests to Roosevelt (35% of 43), according to District 4J data, were specifically for reasons of its program and/or general environment.

Some transfer requests from Jefferson to Roosevelt may have been prompted also by parental dissatisfaction at Jefferson. Although District 4J data indicate that only 5% of the transfers requested to Roosevelt involved various problems at the previous school, according to the questionnaire data, four of the 13 reasons mentioned to the district for requesting a transfer away from Jefferson were negative, as were eight of ten reasons not mentioned. Dissatisfaction centered around the school's program and its general environment.

Questionnaire data indicate a third factor possibly affecting the number of transfers from Jefferson: an irregularly high number of transfer requests away from Jefferson had apparently involved a particular staff member at that school as the primary source of information about the possibility of obtaining a transfer. Three of seven requests from Jefferson had involved that staff member. In only one other junior high school had a staff member with the same job assignment been involved, and there only once.

Geography appears to be important at the junior high level, also. Spencer Butte and Jefferson are the two schools immediately adjacent to Roosevelt (see Figure 2); although Roosevelt attracts transfer requests from all of the district, most come from these two schools.

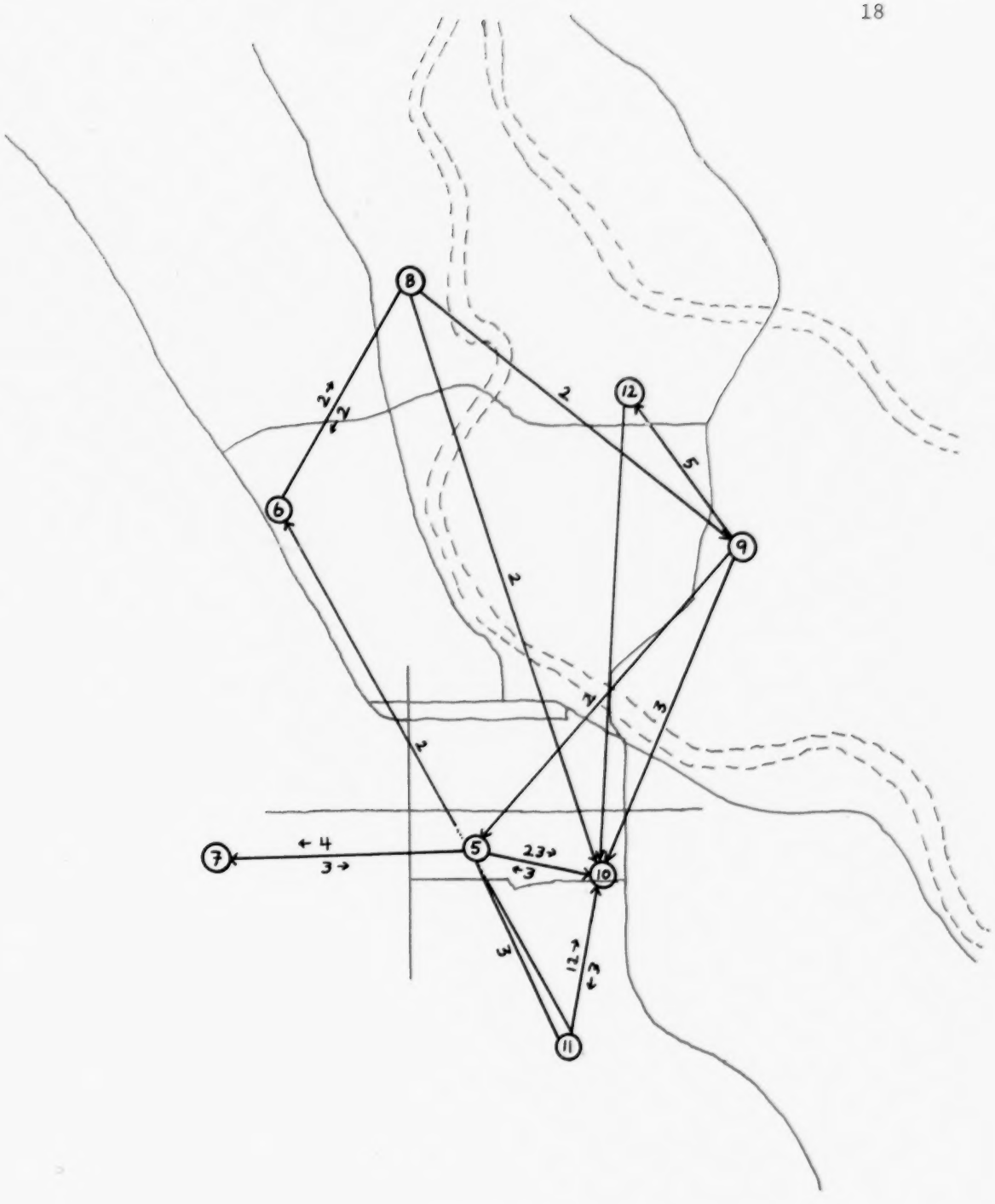


Figure 2

Geographic representation of numbers of junior high school students involved in transfer requests, by schools (frequencies greater than one)--from District 4J data (n = 107)

At the elementary level several schools were involved in relatively large numbers of transfer requests: three schools (Adams, Edgewood, and Willard Elementary Schools) attracted large numbers of requests to them; and four schools (Dunn, Fox Hollow, Patterson, and Santa Clara Elementary Schools) had large numbers of transfers requested away from them (see Table 6).

Requests for transfers from Patterson (and Westmoreland Elementary School)to Adams appear to be largely for reasons of safety. Busy 18th Avenue cuts through the southern portion of the Patterson (and Westmoreland) district(s); it would seem that some parents would rather send their children to the adjacent Adams district than have them cross the thoroughfare. Both District 4J data and questionnaire data show two-thirds of the requests to Adams being based on reasons of safety; no additional reasons were recorded on the questionnaire as <u>not</u> being mentioned to the district.

Although the data concerning Edgewood are inconclusive, the school may have attracted a large number of requests for two reasons: its unique (and well publicized), Federally-funded, arts-centered curriculum; and, problems a few parents had had at its two major "feeder" schools, Dunn and Fox Hollow. (At Dunn and Fox Hollow, according to questionnaire data, those parents had been dissatisfied primarily with the schools' programs and general environments.)

The reasons why Willard attracted a large number of requests are clearer: Willard has established a reputation in its neighborhood as a flexible, innovative school. Although questionnaire data show that, of those reasons for transfer requests to Willard mentioned to

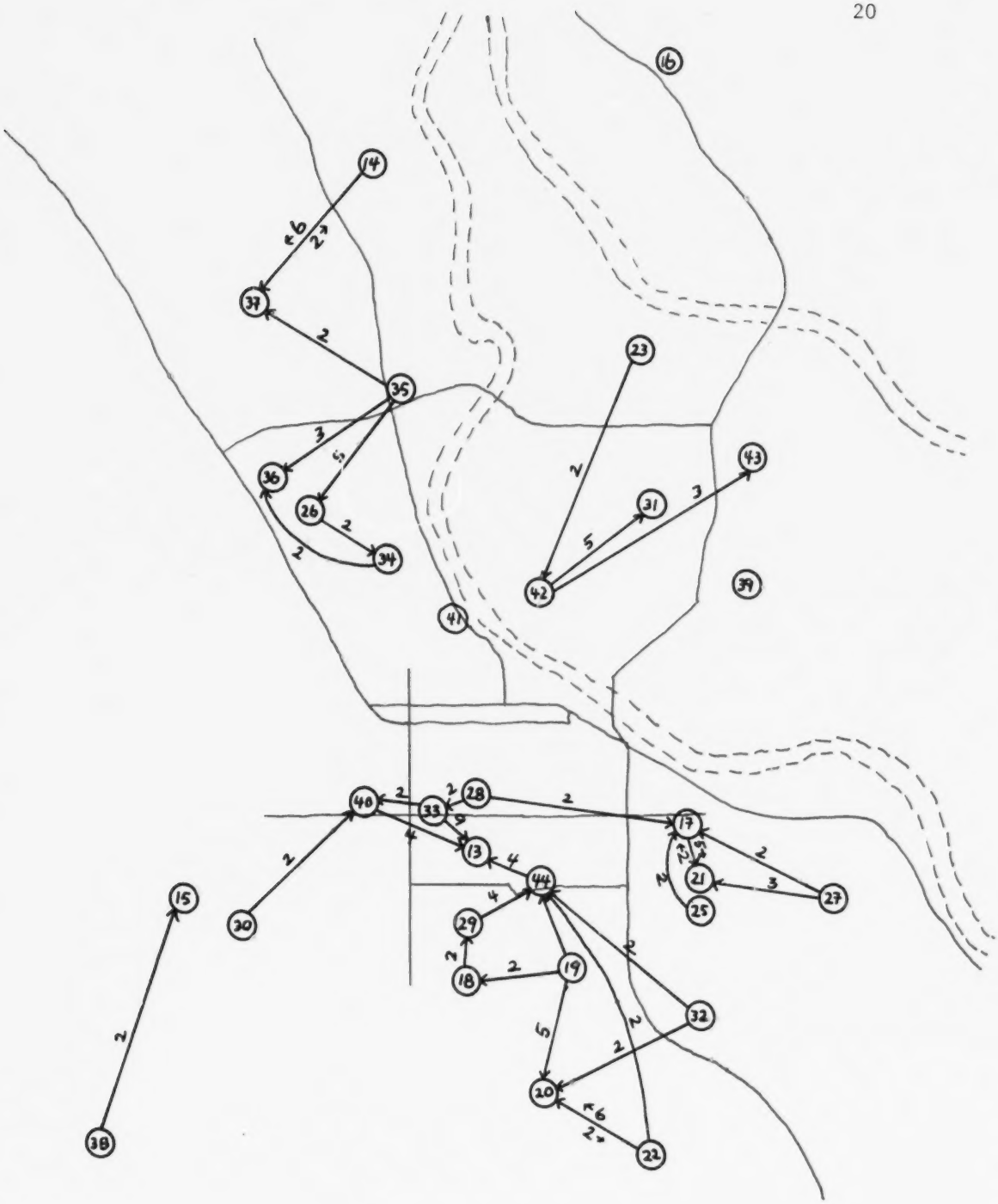


Figure 3

Geographic representation of numbers of elementary students involved in transfer requests, by schools (frequencies greater than one)--from District 4J data (n = 142)

the district, only one was due to its program and/or general environment, four of the seven reasons not mentioned involved the program and/or general environment of the school. Willard apparently also attracted a number of parents who had had problems at Dunn and Fox Hollow (see above paragraph): two of the seven reasons for transfer requests to Willard mentioned to the district, according to the questionnaire data, involved various problems at those schools; three of the seven reasons for transfer requests to Willard not mentioned to the district also involved such problems.

The data reveal no readily apparent reasons for the large number of requests for transfers away from Santa Clara.

Geography is probably more important at the elementary level than at any other level. In Figure 3, one can notice the existence of several geographic "subsystems" of transfers. Transportation and safety are apparently more important at this level. The more isolated schools, (Coburg, Twin Oaks, Laurel Hill, and Awbrey Park Elementary Schools, etc.) received few transfer requests.

Where Did Parents Learn of Transfers?

According to the questionnaire data, most parents had found out that they could get transfers from school officials, guidance counselors, friends, and from central office personnel. Others assumed that they could get a transfer, were aware from common knowledge that they could get one, or had found out from their children, neighbors, or colleagues (see Table 7).

TABLE 7

Sources of Information About Transfer (From Questionnaire Data)

	(n = 132)[a]
School Officials	21%
Guidance Counselor	21
Friends	18
Central Offices	13
Common Knowledge	5
Children	5
Neighbor	5
Colleague	4
Other	8

[a]Figures include all sources of information indicated by questionnaire respondents (107 recorded one source, 21 recorded two sources, three recorded three sources, one recorded four sources).

It might be noted that the questionnaire data seem to indicate that most of those parents who had gone to the top of the center of authority in the district--to the central office--were parents in the upper-income brackets. Of the 15 families who had gone to the central offices for information about obtaining a transfer, 12 had incomes of over $12,000, eight had incomes of over $15,000. Those in the questionnaire sample who were aware from common knowledge that it was possible to get transfers were also from the upper-income brackets.

Were Parents Satisfied with Their Children's Present School Situation?

According to the questionnaire data, 90% of the parents who had requested transfers were either very satisfied or satisfied with their children's present school situation; 2% were slightly satisfied or neutral; 6% were slightly dissatisfied; and only 2% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Did Students in the District Become More Homogeneously Grouped?

The final question with which we were concerned was whether students in District 4J had become more or less homogeneously grouped (in terms of their socioeconomic status) as a result of its transfer policy. Questionnaire data only tell half of the story: although there are data on the direction of socioeconomic movement between schools, there is not data concerning the present socioeconomic composition of district schools. Unfortunately, the socioeconomic composition of school attendance areas cannot be easily extrapolated from any existing data, including the 1970 U. S. Census data. Thus, the most we can convey here is the direction of socioeconomic movement; this we will do, drawing from the questionnaire data.

At the high school level, parents who requested transfers for the 1971-72 school year were predominantly of high socioeconomic status (28% of the male parents were blue-collar workers, 31% were white-collar workers, 41% were managerial-professionals; 43% had received at least a bachelor's degree; 39% earned $10,000-$15,000; 48% earned $15,000 or more). Churchill gained students of high socioeconomic status; South Eugene lost such students. Questionnaire data are not sufficient to reveal any trends between North Eugene and Sheldon.

At the junior high school level, parents who requested transfers were of mixed (though high) socioeconomic status (53% of the male parents were blue-collar workers, 19% were white-collar workers, 28% were managerial-professionals; 55% had received at least a bachelor's degree; 36% earned $10,000-$15,000, 40% earned over $15,000). Roosevelt gained students of high, medium, and low socioeconomic status; Jefferson lost students of medium socioeconomic status, and Spencer Butte lost students of medium to high socioeconomic status. Data are unsufficient to determine any trends for other junior high schools.

At the elementary school level, parents who requested transfers were of medium to high socioeconomic status (21% of the male parents were blue-collar workers, 23% were white-collar workers, and 45% were managerial-professionals; 54% had received at least a bachelor's degree; 51% of the families earned $10,000-$15,000, 24% earned over $15,000). Adams, Edgewood, and Willard all gained students of high socioeconomic status; Dunn and Fox Hollow lost students of high socioeconomic status, and Patterson lost students of mixed socioeconomic status. Data are insufficient to reveal any trends for other elementary schools.

Additional Data from the Questionnaire

Although we did not originally intend to study the administrative decision-making behavior of those administering District 4J's transfer policy, responses to our questionnaire provided some interesting data concerning that matter. These data were the following statements (in answer to open questions):

"My child has made very good progress in school this year. The opportunity of choosing her own study areas has greatly increased her motivation and commitment to the job. She has voluntarily registered for courses to improve her weak areas, is eager to attend school, proud of belonging to that school, and takes full responsibility for her school work. This program has my full support--I am only distressed that the transfer was only granted for one year and we can look forward to the same hassle in getting another transfer for next year."

"(-----) is an outstanding school with so many opportunities for kids. My children have made many nice friends--students and teachers. Only sorry that they must go to a different high school and have to start all over." (Parent whose request had been denied)

"but we were told that we would be denied transfered to Junior High at (-----)."

"The situation at (-----) has worsened and we are requesting again for transfer for the 3 youngest this coming fall. We feel the program at (-----) is completely without direction and the children (ours and classmates) are not progressing to the level they should for their ages."

"My child is exceptionally bright--school held no challenges--boredom caused truancy--no-one seemed interested in giving her anything to 'get her teeth into.' Also an experimenter, a daredevil and innovative. School suggested transfer--Seemed to want to be rid of her.--We did not transfer because of transportation problems--and school problems remain."

"First transfer request was denied (asked for (-----)). (-----) was difficult for one child--he never adjusted!"

These data raise a number of questions: Why are some people apparently "hassled" and others (those who didn't make such comments) not? Why were some reasons apparently "legitimate" and others not? Are student transfers being used in a retributive manner by schools?

4: Validity of the Data

We must mention a number of limitations of the data discussed above. In doing so, we will first consider the data which we received from District 4J, then the data collected via our questionnaire,

and finally, the Census data to which we compared some of our questionnaire data.

There are at least two limitations of the data collected from District 4J files, both concerning the reasons for which transfers were requested: (1) As we have mentioned, District 4J personnel, in coding the reasons for which transfers were requested, represented the entire set of reasons contained in each written request by only a single coded reason: certainly, considerable information was lost; not to mention the interpretive bias of the person (or persons) doing the coding. And (2) The reasons for transfer requests contained in the parents' written requests to the district were probably only those reasons which parents thought legitimate enough to obtain approval of their requests; "illegitimate," but just as real, reasons were very likely not to have been included in those written requests. Questionnaire data support this contention.

The data obtained from the questionnaire have at least four limitations: (1) Responses were received from only 42% of the families to whom we mailed the questionnaire. This is a sample large enough to make qualified statements such as we have throughout this paper, but there are probably segments of the population which have not been properly represented. One particular population which we know to be improperly represented is that population of families who had been denied their requests for transfers. District 4J data show that approximately 10% of the transfer requests for the 1971-72 school year were denied; this would involve 30 families. However, only two of the 117 responses which we received were from families whose requests had been denied. As one can notice, we have not attempted to generalize

about this particular population. One indication of the relative validity of the questionnaire data is the close parallel of questionnaire data on reasons for transfer requests (those mentioned to the district) to those reasons indicated in 4J data (see Table 4): with the exception of what might be considered "negative" reasons, the relative frequencies of reasons are very similar.

(2) We assume that male and female parents in any given family would have answered in the same manner. This assumption is of particular consequence to the validity of those questions in which there is room for subjectivity; these would be particularly those questions concerning reasons for their request, and satisfaction with their child's present school situation. (3) We assume that, in asking parents to give information only about their most recent transfer request (see Footnote 8), we are not losing an inordinate amount of information. And, (4) in regard to parents' satisfaction with their children's present school situations, the data (see p. 23) must be taken with a grain of salt: a test of parental satisfaction over time would likely provide different results than a test, such as the one in the questionnaire, of parental satisfaction soon after they have been positively reinforced by the granting of their transfer request.

The census data to which we compared some of our questionnaire data are not the best comparative data, for three reasons: (1) They are data for the population of people within the city limits of Eugene; and, although it overlaps considerably, that population is not the same as the population of people within District 4J. We assume, however, that it is close enough for our purposes. (2) Even forgetting about

the slightly different areas from which the populations are drawn, we are still comparing different populations: for instance, we are comparing the income of families with the income of families with children in school; we are also comparing the occupations of males, 16 years and older, with the occupations of males, who are parents with children in school; likewise females and female parents of children in school; finally, we are comparing the number of years of schooling of males, and females, 25 years and older, with the number of years of schooling of male parents and female parents, with children in school. (3) The scaling of one of the variables (number of years of schooling) is different in the Census data than it is in questionnaire data.

Unfortunately, these are the best comparative data available without conducting a random sample of the population of people in Eugene (or in District 4J): Census data is not available for public use at a municipal level, except in the form which we have used it (we could not, for instance, generate a table of the incomes of families with children in school, or even a table of the incomes of men with children 6-17 years old, or even a table of the incomes of men 20-45 years of age). We do feel, however, that in spite of the roughness of the comparisons, the socioeconomic status of the respondents of the questionnaire is different than that of the comparative populations to a degree great enough to make some qualified conclusions about the nature of the population of people who have requested transfers.

5: Conclusions

(1) As presently structured, the District 4J transfer policy appears to have been utilized primarily by those parents and students of high socioeconomic status.

(2) Any one or a combination of the following factors might have touched off requests for transfers:

(a) If a family had moved and wished their child(ren) to continue at a previously-attended school;

(b) If the program and/or general environment of a particular school were differentiated from that of adjacent schools;

(c) If, for whatever reasons, parents became dissatisfied with a particular school, and there was a more attractive (and known) alternative within a reasonable distance;

(d) If, in the case of a junior or senior high school, boundaries were drawn so as to divide parts of the student body of a feeder school;

(e) If, in the case of an elementary school, a major traffic arterial bisected its attendance area.

(3) Parents had likely learned about the possibility of obtaining a school transfer from a variety of sources. School officials, guidance counselors, friends, and the district offices were the most frequently mentioned sources.

(4) Parents were apparently very largely satisfied with their children's present school situation.

(5) Available data are insufficient to determine whether students in District 4J are becoming more or less homogeneously grouped in terms of socioeconomic status.

6: Speculations

(1) A large number of requests to some schools may have been caused in part by the existence of:

(a) A large percentage of rented homes within the schools' attendance areas--this might have precipitated requests from families who had moved and desired their children to continue in the same school.

(b) Larger amounts of information (particularly via the mass media) about those schools--this might have caused parents to be more aware of alternatives to their present school, possibly of alternatives more desirable than their present school;

(c) Peer pressure on parents and/or children to attend those schools--the styles of schooling, or the schools themselves, may have been in vogue at the time.

(2) As presently structured and administrated, the District 4J transfer policy may discriminate against the participation of families of low socioeconomic status, for four reasons:

(a) The availability of school transfers is not publicly advertised; studies have shown that is not generally people of low socioeconomic status who have access to privileged information--if people don't know about a policy, they can't take advantage of it.

(b) Information about various schools is not generally available;again, it is generally not people of low socioeconomic status who have access to privileged information--if people do not know what their alternatives are, they can't choose from among them.

(c) Transportation is not provided; only those who can afford the additional time and/or money can take advantage of the transfer policy--this is particularly true at the elementary school level, as such students are often not able to manage medium-long distances by themselves.

(d) In deciding that they "can't give everyone" a transfer, administrators may be discriminating against those people who don't know how to convince them of the validity of their arguments--it is likely the highly schooled people (people of high socioeconomic status) who can best sell their arguments.

Footnotes

[1]One proposal for increasing family choice in schooling is that of John Coons, et al., of the University of California Law School. See John Coons and Stephen Sugarman, "Family Choice in Education: A Model State System for Vouchers." Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, 1971. See also: Mario Fantini, The Reform of Urban Schools. Schools for the 70's Series, National Education Association. Washington, D. C.: NEA, 1971; and Center for the Study of Public Policy, Education Vouchers: A Report on Financing Elementary Education by Grants to Parents. Cambridge, Massachusetts: CSPP, 1970.

[2]Two critics of various proposals for increasing family choice in schooling are Henry Levin, of Stanford University, and George LaNoue, of Columbia University's Teachers College. See Henry Levin, "The Failure of Public Schools and the Free Market Remedy," Urban Review, June, 1968; and George LaNoue, Vouchers: Concepts and Controversies. New York: Teachers College Press, 1972.

[3]Two quite relevant sets of experiments, those conducted by the U. S. Office of Economic Opportunity (education vouchers), and the U.S. Office of Education (experimental schools), are underway, but will provide little data until completion, several years hence.

[4]The District 4J policy concerning transfers (Section 8.82 of the Administrative Manual) states: "Superintendent's Transfer. Children shall attend the school located in the attendance area in which they reside unless on presentation of good and sufficient reasons they are given permission by the Superintendent to transfer to another school. The health of the child and hardship on the parents shall be considered adequate reasons for requesting transfer." The district administrator in charge of transfers has quite a degree of latitude in interpreting the policy.

[5]What is referred to as a "transfer request" in this context is actually a transaction involving a transfer request. A family might have made one transfer request for three children. Most data which we received was based on the number of such transfer requests, rather than on the specific number of children for whom transfers were requested. There were 299 transfer requests for 332 children. (Table 6 and Figures 1, 2, and 3 do, however, reflect the number of children for whom transfer requests were made.)

[6]The district did not, however, incur the costs of printing or mailing the questionnaire.

[7]Census data in this and following tables are from U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population. General Social and Economic Characteristics, Oregon. 1972, pp. 177-193. Figures are for that population of people within the Eugene city limits (n = 76,349), unless otherwise noted.

[8]We asked respondents to state the reasons for their most recent transfer requests only (see questionnaire, Appendix A). We did this to simplify the answering of the questionnaire. (71% of the parents had requested a transfer for only one child, 22% had requested transfers for two children, 6% had requested transfers for three children, and 1% had requested transfers for five children.)

[9]As the district coded the information from their files into one reason for each transfer request, multiple reasons may have been lost.

[10]It will be seen later that such transfer requests may have been due to attraction to particular schools, dissatisfaction with the original schools (i.e., those schools from which transfer requests were originated), or a combination of the two.

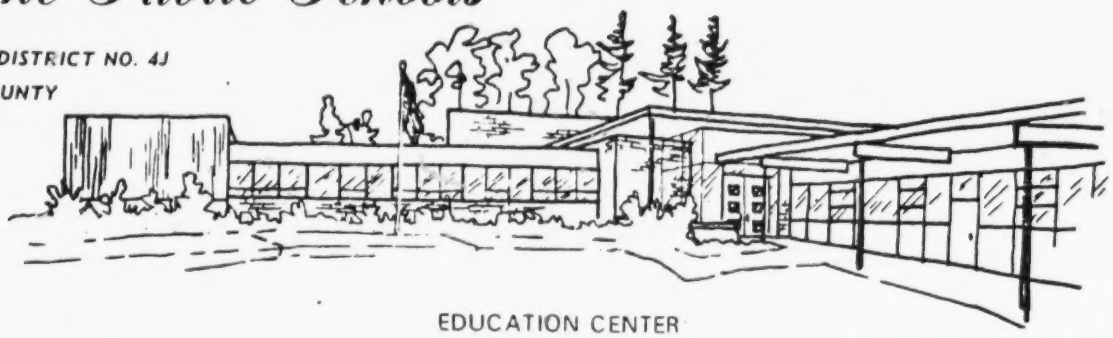
[11]These figures are for requests to Churchill. Ten of the 26 reasons not mentioned to the district for transfer requests away from South Eugene were also for such reasons.

[12]If a school has an "open campus," students are not required to be at school other than when they have classes. If a school has a "closed campus," students must remain at school regardless of whether or not they have classes scheduled.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire and Cover Letters

Eugene Public Schools
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4J
LANE COUNTY



EDUCATION CENTER

200 North Monroe Street • Eugene, Oregon 97402 • Telephone: 342-5611

May 26, 1972

Dear Patron:

The enclosed questionnaire and letter were developed by Dr. John Orbell, Associate Professor of Political Science, and Mr. David Sonnenfeld, an undergraduate student at the University of Oregon. They were interested in obtaining a list of all School District 4J patrons who requested school transfers during the last school year. However, we do not have the right to give your name and address to any group for non-District use without your permission.

Therefore, the envelopes for this mailing were prepared by District personnel and mailed for and at the expense of Dr. Orbell's group. Let me stress your name was not given to this group.

The District is neither encouraging nor discouraging your participation in this study. Information regarding the study is sent you in a way that maintains confidentiality regarding your student and your address.

Sincerely,

Millard Z. Pond
Superintendent-Clerk

MZP:jd
Enclosure

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Department of
Political Science
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

EUGENE, OREGON 97403
telephone (code 503) 686-4864

To: People who have requested school transfers from District 4J

Last year, almost 300 school transfers were requested in School District 4J. In recent years, the number of people requesting school transfers has risen quite substantially.

We have been working since January in trying to determine the effects of school transfers. We are attempting to find out why people enroll in different schools.

We would greatly appreciate it if you could take about 10 - 15 minutes of your time and complete the enclosed, three-page questionnaire.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS ANYWHERE ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

In order to protect your privacy, the information should be filled out on a completely anonymous basis.

When you are finished with the questio-naire, please seal it in the enclosed, pre-stamped envelope, and forward it to John Orbell, Department of Political Science, University of Oregon.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. The information which you give us will be extremely valuable in assessing the effects of school transfers in Eugene.

Sincerely,

John Orbell
Associate Professor

David Sonnenfeld
Independent Scholar

QUESTIONNAIRE

NOTE: PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS ANYWHERE ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. In order to protect your privacy, the information should be filled out on a completely anonymous basis only. Thank you.

---

(1) Person(s) filling out questionnaire:

___ (1) Father
___ (2) Mother
___ (3) Father and Mother
___ (4) Other _____

(2) Number of children: ___

(3) Age of each child: _____

(4, 5) Formal schooling completed:

Mother	Father	
___	___	(1) less than high school
___	___	(2) high school
___	___	(3) two years college or vocational school
___	___	(4) bachelor's degree
___	___	(5) advanced college degree

(6) Combined yearly income of family:

___ (1) less than $4000
___ (2) 4000 - 5,999
___ (3) 6000 - 7,999
___ (4) 8000 - 9,999
___ (5) 10,000 - 11,999
___ (6) 12,000 - 14,999
___ (7) 15,000 - 24,999
___ (8) 25,000 or more

(7) Occupation of father: _____

(8) Occupation of mother: _____

(9) How long have you lived in your present junior high school district?

___ (1) less than 1 year
___ (2) 1 - 2 years
___ (3) 2 - 3 years
___ (4) 3 - 5 years
___ (5) 5 - 10 years
___ (6) more than 10 years

(10) How much longer do you think you will be staying in your present junior high school district?

___ (1) less than 1 year
___ (2) 1 - 2 years
___ (3) 2 - 3 years
___ (4) 3 - 5 years
___ (5) 5 - 10 years
___ (6) more than 10 years

(11) Number of children school transfers requested for: ___

(12) Age of each child transfer requested for: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE FOR
MOST RECENT TRANSFER ONLY

(13 - 16) Date transfer requested: _____

(17, 18) School transfer requested to: _____

(19, 20) School transfer requested from: _____

(21) Reasons for request (as stated to school district):

(22) Other contributing reasons for request (not mentioned in request to school district):

(23) Request was: ___ (1) Accepted
___ (2) Denied

(24) Where did you find out that you could get a school transfer? (Friends, neighbors, children, at work, from the principal, from the guidance counselor, from the district offices, etc.):

(25) Before you requested a school transfer, how easy (hard) did you think it would be to get a transfer?

___ (1) very easy
___ (2) easy
___ (3) more easy than hard
___ (4) neither easy nor hard
___ (5) more hard than easy
___ (6) hard
___ (7) very hard
___ (8) didn't know

(26) After you requested a transfer, how easy (hard) did you feel it had been to get a transfer?

___ (1) very easy
___ (2) easy
___ (3) more easy than hard
___ (4) neither easy nor hard
___ (5) more hard than easy
___ (6) hard
___ (7) very hard

(27) How satisfied (dissatisfied) are you with the school situation your child is in now?

___ (1) very satisfied
___ (2) satisfied
___ (3) slightly satisfied
___ (4) neutral
___ (5) slightly dissatisfied
___ (6) dissatisfied
___ (7) very dissatisfied

(28) Please explain your answer to question #27:

APPENDIX B

Explanation of Occupational Classification

People were generally classified into one of three occupational categories, managerial-professional, white-collar, or blue-collar. Those occupations which required a college degree were generally categorized as managerial-professional. White-collar workers were seen as being primarily civil servants, service-workers, and entrepreneurs. Blue-collar workers were seen as being manual laborers, factory workers, etc. Occupations represented on the questionnaires were classified as follows:

Managerial-professional: medical therapist, librarian, teacher, self-employed, office manager, field manager, architect, business manager, soil scientist, professor, regiatered nurse, foreman, accountant, social worker.

White-collar: talent agent, insurance agent, policeman, salesman, teacher's aide, bookkeeper, designer, weaver, clerk, piano teacher, secretary, office worker, receptionist, hair dresser.

Blue-collar: electrician, heating repairman, tool and die maker, electronics engineer, construction worker, surveyor, engineer.

Data from the Census were re-grouped in a similar manner.